

Woking 2, Wycombe Wanderers 3

THE 'old firm' of Tony Horseman and Keith Samuels supplied Wycombe Wanderers with the necessary goal flair to reap their 12th away point of the season at Woking on Saturday.

As appears to be their custom when entertaining Wycombe, Woking staged a spirited revival in the second half and could have reached equal status in the final 20 minutes.

However, on their first-half showing alone, Wanderers were well worth both points. Their superior all-round skill and tremendously high work-rate continually upset Woking.

Wanderers took command almost immediately and dictated the pattern of the play with some extremely attractive approach-work when considering the heavy conditions.

Poor Woking, the week before they had been hit for six by Enfield on their home ground, where one small consolation they gained from defeat was that they kept the rampant Enfield forwards at bay until the 53rd minute.

But they could not deny Wanderers that long. A superb four-man movement cut their defence to shreds in the eighth minute. Incidentally, the calibre of this move reached such a high peak that I am willing to bet no rearguard in amateur football could have halted it.

Live-wire winger Len Worley gained possession on the half-way line and cut across the field before releasing a perfectly judged pass into the path of Charlie Gale.

Gale quickly switched the ball out to Merrick with slide-rule precision and Merrick's centre found Samuels' head and the stranded Farris could only help the ball into the top right hand corner.

On such a sticky pitch one would have thought close inter-passing would have been beyond question! Not so for Wanderers as they played some delightful short passing slotting the ball to colleague after colleague.

To combat Wanderer's raids, Woking's main tactic was to clear upfield and give their forwards some chasing practice. To keep this up for 90 minutes was a tall order but the home forwards responded magnificently to the challenge.

The initiative was very much in the hands of Wanderers and Woking must have breathed a heavy sigh of relief when Hill was on the line to clear from Samuel's shot following a Worley corner.

Worley's continual raiding down the right wing provided the Woking defence with no end of problems and often their answer went too near to infringing the rules for comfort.

On the stroke of half-time Wycombe's defence, perhaps with their minds on the ten-minute break, were caught off-guard as Vaughan whipped through the defence from the half-way line.

Not even the usually reliable Lailey could spot the danger quick enough and Vaughan tested Maskell with a snap drive which the 'keeper did well to reach, but as he tried to clutch the ball Marks, following up intelligently, raced forward to sweep Woking level.

Before Woking had any chance of celebrating they found themselves in arrears. Now well into injury-time, Samuels re-started play and Wycombe surged downfield for Horseman to coolly lob the ball over Farris and restore the advantage.

Within three minutes of the second period Horseman revealed to the crowd the quality which makes him such a feared striker in amateur circles.

Thomas, who had been one of the driving forces in mid-field, gave Horseman a pass to chase. As Goodwin and Povey converged on the danger Horseman nipped between them and poached a simple-looking goal.

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A FIERCE WOKING rally had Wycombe clinging desperately to both points at Kingfield.

Wycombe took a ninth minute lead when Keith Samuels headed in. Marks equalised for Woking just before half time, but immediately Horseman lobbed Wycombe in front.

It was Horseman who put Wycombe 3-1 in front after 49 minutes.

A speculative 25-yard shot by Woking captain Finn after 64 minutes opened the game up but Wycombe held on deservedly.

This goal appeared to drain a vast amount of the energy from Woking and they carelessly left large gaps in their defence to be exploited.

Horseman was stopped from netting a deserved hat-trick as Elton cleared off the line when Gale's long through-pass had thrown the Woking defenders into panic stations.

However, Woking discovered extra reserves of stamina in the 68th minute. Finn, racing forward onto a square pass, fired a low 25-yard drive towards the left hand corner and Maskell saw the flight of the ball too late.

This surprise goal really put new spirit into Woking's play and the rest of the match was dominated by the home side as they rediscovered some faith in their football.

The one blemish on an otherwise sporting contest, taking into account the difficult conditions, came in the 72nd minute when Hill was booked for a ruthless foul on Merrick.